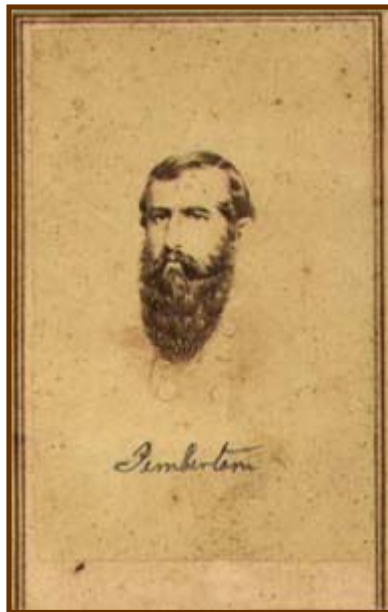


CONCEPTS FOR FUTURE USE AND TREATMENT OF  
PEMBERTON'S HEADQUARTERS  
VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

Prepared by the National Park Service  
Vicksburg National Military Park  
Vicksburg, Mississippi



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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Congress established Vicksburg National Military Park to “commemorate the campaign and siege and defense of Vicksburg”. Legislation passed in 1990 added interpreting “... the history of Vicksburg under Union occupation during the Civil War and Reconstruction” to the park’s mission, and legislation passed in 2002 authorized acquisition of General John C. Pemberton’s Headquarters during the siege of Vicksburg. General Pemberton and his senior officers occupied the house (previously known as the Willis-Cowan house) from May 23 until the Confederate surrender on July 4, 1863. It was here that General Pemberton and his staff met on July 3 and made the fateful decision to surrender the city. Because of its historical significance, Pemberton’s Headquarters is designated as a National Historic Landmark. As authorized, the Federal government purchased it in 2003.

With public support, Congress added Pemberton’s Headquarters to the Vicksburg National Military Park in 2002, and the Federal government purchased it in 2003. However the structure is in danger of further deterioration, and the decision was made to implement a short-term project to stabilize and repair the structure, as well as a long-term set of plans for use and treatment. The present project is the first step towards achieving the second goal of establishing long-term use and treatment options for the building. Both the short- and long-term projects have been designed to compliment each other to allow for the beneficial future use of the building by park visitors.

### Purpose

The purpose of the present project is to develop long-term concepts for future use and treatment of Pemberton’s Headquarters at Vicksburg National Military Park, based on all available preliminary studies and on input from stakeholders and other members of the interested public.

This report provides information about public perceptions related to the several preliminary concepts, the adequacy of the range of concepts, and what the public viewed as the pros and cons of the concepts. The report also describes how the concepts were communicated to the public, how comments were collected, and the process used to evaluate the comments received.

The parallel short-term stabilization and repair project is also underway, and is described in the draft report entitled “Draft Schematic Design Preferred Alternative Basis of Design Report and Supplemental Documents, Repair/Stabilize Lt. General John C. Pemberton’s Headquarters, PMIS # 117412, Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, Mississippi” (Hartrampf 2005). The short-term project has been designed to allow implementation of the long-term concepts for future use and treatment of Pemberton’s Headquarters.

The concepts for future use and treatment developed as a result of this project will be used in subsequent years to help develop an updated general management plan for Vicksburg National Military Park. In the event an Environmental Assessment (EA) is

Fig1 Location Map

required for the companion stabilization/rehabilitation project, the concepts and public comments produced during this project would also form part of the external scoping for that EA.

This report includes the following sections:

- A summary of the public involvement process employed to obtain comments from the public regarding concepts for future use and treatment of Pemberton's Headquarters.

- A summary of issues and topics identified.

- A summary of the types of comments received on each issue, and a tally of comment origination.

- A description of the final set of possible concepts for use and treatment of the Pemberton's Headquarters based on public input.

- A summary of the results of the future use and treatment alternatives development process.

- A list of the literature used in preparing this report.

- A set of appendices, including all of the public comments received.

#### The Public Involvement Process

The first step taken in the public involvement process was to review available information on the Pemberton's Headquarters, and use this information to develop a set of preliminary alternative concepts for future use and treatment of the structure. The primary information used initially included reports and data provided by park staff and elected officials, and a 2005 draft report prepared for the National Park Service by Joseph K. Oppermann, entitled "Vicksburg National Military Park, Pemberton's Headquarters (Willis-Cowan house), Historic Structure Report." (Oppermann 2005). In addition, the National Park Service held focus group meetings on April 27-28, 2005 to obtain public input. This information was analyzed and summarized in a PowerPoint slide show (Appendix A).

An open house and public meeting was held at Pemberton's Headquarters in Vicksburg on October 6, 2005 to obtain additional public input on the preliminary alternative concepts for future use and treatment of the structure. The National Park Service publicized the event in the local newspaper and informed local, State, and Federal agencies; Indian Tribes; interest groups; and the general public via a newsletter, public announcements, the internet, and letters.

Open house and public meeting participants were encouraged to submit comments at the meetings, or to email or mail their comments to the National Park Service at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> during a 30-day comment period. The public was also invited to submit written comments via the web site or through the mail, using a comment form prepared for this purpose.

All comments were analyzed and used to create a set of final alternative concepts that are presented in this report. The final alternative concepts for future use and treatment have

been designed to accommodate implementation of any of the future uses and treatments proposed in the historic structures report and the schematic design study previously cited above.

## CONTENT ANALYSIS

### Comment Origination

A total of 42 comment forms were received either at the open house and public meeting or via e-mail or parcel mail (Appendix B). Table 1 presents general information about comment sources.

TABLE 1: COMMENT ORIGINS	
Source of Comment	No. of Respondents
Public meetings and open house	25 comment forms received
Comment forms/letters/electronic submittals	19 comment forms received

### Comment Types

In some cases, multiple comments were contained in a single response, while other respondents focused on a particular aspect of the project. The analysis of comments in this report summarizes the concepts represented by the comments. It does not tally the number of comments per concept because the content of the comment was deemed to be the important factor rather than the number of times that particular perspective was expressed.

All comments were read and analyzed, and the opinions, feelings, and preferences for one element or one potential concept over another were reviewed, along with comments of a personal or philosophical nature. All comments were considered, whether they were presented by several people saying the same thing or by a single person expressing a unique viewpoint.

Although the analysis attempts to capture the full range of public concerns, the summary of comments should be used with caution. Comments from people who chose to respond do not necessarily represent the sentiments of the entire public. Further, this was not a vote-counting process, and the emphasis was on the content of the comment rather than the number of times a comment was received.

Most of those attending the open house and public meeting and those who submitted written comments agreed that the range of concepts for future use and treatment of Pemberton's Headquarters is appropriate. None of the respondents indicated that the range needed to be expanded. Table 2 shows the analysis of comments by favored concept. Several commenters did, however, suggest additions/changes to the preliminary concepts presented at the meetings and in the newsletter. These suggestions are discussed under "Representative Comments," as follows.

TABLE 2: PREFERRED CONCEPTS	
Concept	No. of Comments Favoring Each Concept
Concept 1: Remove post 1863 additions, restore exterior and interior, reconstruct porch.	5
Concept 2: Remove post 1863 additions, restore exterior, rehabilitate interior.	0
Concept 3: Preserve all extant exteriors and interiors as found.	4
Concept 4: Restore exterior and interior to 1863, remove 1913 addition, and rehabilitate 1919 addition.	5

### Issues and Topics

The comments also were sorted into logical groupings by topics/issues. Six main issues/topics were identified: (1) types of use, (2) types of treatment, (3) “the story” and how it could be communicated, (4) opportunities for partnering with others, (5) maintenance needs and requirements, and (6) access.

### Representative Comments

Of the 44 written comment forms received, seven indicated that the range of concepts for future use and treatment of Pemberton’s Headquarters was appropriate. The remainder left this part of the comment sheet blank, or made other comments; none of the comments indicated that the range was inadequate.

### Comments on Types of Use

Questions were raised during the meetings regarding the ways the second floor and basement of the Pemberton’s Headquarters could be used, but there was no clear consensus on possible uses. Most felt that the preservation of the resource should be the number one priority, with National Park Service administrative needs having second priority. However, while respondents were unclear as to what offices or other facilities might be needed by the park, there seemed to be a general feeling that National Park Service offices and other administrative functions should not be installed in the upstairs/1863 portion of the house. Several respondents suggested that the 1919 additions or the basement could be used for utilitarian purposes or park offices, and that new additions to the house or a reconstructed kitchen behind the headquarters could provide facilities for interpretation and/or a tea room where visitors and townspeople could have lunch.

Some participants commented that if the existing janitorial and restroom plumbing (6 restrooms) were left in place, the building would probably suffer damaged if leaks eventually occurred. However, others commented that, under restoration, restrooms would be removed and this would tend to limit the types of activities that could occur in the building, as well as creating a hardship for employees, the elderly, and those with small children.

There were also questions regarding the number of visitors that could be accommodated at one time, and concerns over the load bearing capacity of the floors.

#### Comments on Types of Treatment

Treatment would be guided by the Secretary's Standards and, because the building is a National Historic Landmark, special provisions would be required for protecting the building's structural integrity; e.g. its original materials, massing, scale, and design. Preservation of the front room where Pemberton met with the Union Army was defined as a priority by one respondent while another defined preservation of Pemberton's office as the number one priority. Several participants commented that the National Park Service should "keep on with accuracy; ....keep as it was during the siege, ....don't disturb the ambiance."

One person raised questions about the level of restoration that should be implemented and how to balance that against the types of tours that would be employed, e.g., the commenter noted that the level of restoration would influence the types of interpretive programs that would be developed for the headquarters.

Some respondents suggested that National Park Service offices should not be put in the 1863 structure because installation of the necessary wiring for computers, telephones, etc. would destroy historic fabric and would be visually intrusive. There seemed to be general agreement that the current number of bathrooms (6) is unnecessary, and that the presence of the restrooms and janitorial areas hold high potential for structural damage from potentially leaking pipes.

Future treatment of the headquarters presents a conundrum—an interpretive focus on the siege and the use of the house by General Pemberton as the Confederate headquarters would mean removing later, non-related structural elements such as the 1919 addition and the small bathroom added by the Sisters of Mercy. A number of people made this comment.

In contrast, other participants indicated that because the Sisters of Mercy were an important part of the community for many years, elements of the house added by the Sisters have gained historic importance in their own right. These commenters noted that the house is dear to Vicksburg residents for its shared experiences, and for the people associated with the structure who are treasured by the community, and for the "continuity of generations" (the three or more generations who attended classes here with the Sisters of Mercy). There were also concerns that changes in the structure could disturb the building's ambiance. Some commenters also noted that removal of building elements such as the 1919 addition would be permanent, and that it would be unwise and costly to tear down the addition only to later rebuild it (or another facility) to house National Park Service offices.

Restoration work proposed for the rear of the house was identified as an issue because good information on the design of the rear porch is lacking and it is unknown whether or not the porch was enclosed or not. It was suggested that an archeological assessment could possibly answer some of the questions about the porch.



Several commenters suggested reconstruction of the exterior kitchen that had been removed from behind the headquarters in the recent past. This reconstructed building could be used for public restrooms and/or for National Park Service offices, or for interpretation. Construction of a new wing or a new museum elsewhere to house interpretive technology was also suggested.

No research has been done on the former kitchen, but the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) visited it prior to demolition, and has an understanding of the historical importance of the structure. Others asked if there were archeological resources in this area, in the former privy area, or in the vicinity of the 1919 addition that could be affected by proposed rehabilitation or restoration activities.

One commenter questioned whether the orientation of the headquarters building had changed (e.g. did the front of the headquarters face in east at one time or was it always in the current northern orientation) and if so, would the restored building face in the right direction? Note that it appears that the orientation of the building has not changed, based on a 1903 affidavit and Sanborn maps.

Several other questions were also related to the orientation of the building, whether structural problems could have been caused by the 1919 addition, and details were provided about interior structural features such as the fireplace mantles and the doors (which are stored temporarily in the basement). There was some agreement that removal of interior walls that were not part of the original house would be acceptable

#### Comments on “The Story” and How It Could Be Communicated

The majority of the comments dealt with the interpretative potential offered by the Pemberton’s Headquarters. The general tone of the public’s concerns was captured by one comment, which indicated that the National Park Service should focus on preserving the building’s historic fabric and integrity while enhancing the park’s interpretive ability and considering park needs. In general, the comments varied and suggest that Pemberton’s Headquarters means different things to different people, especially when they describe the potential scope and focus of the story they would like to be told. Suggestions for interpretation included:

- Interpretation should focus on General Pemberton himself, before, during and after the Siege of Vicksburg;

- Research and interpret the entire history of the house, emphasize its place in history and its appearance during the war;

- Use the house to illustrate life in Vicksburg during and after the surrender and interpret the broader context of the Civil War in the City of Vicksburg (e.g. how Union occupation and military actions affected soldiers and their families as well as Vicksburg citizens);

- Focus on the Civil War Era and the effect of the war on all Southerners;

- Provide an in-depth analysis of the Confederate war effort, Confederate soldiers in the western theater, and the evolution and struggles of the Confederate high command in Mississippi;

Interpret the trauma of the 10-year post-war Reconstruction Period (felt by some of the discussion group participants to be worse than the war itself);

Help visitors understand the Civil Rights Movement;

Include the many ethnic groups who populated Vicksburg; and

Interpret the entire history of the site, including occupation by the Sisters of Mercy.

Specific commenters also raised questions regarding how many visitors could be accommodated at one time in the building, who would “run” the headquarters after restoration, and how the interpretation would be presented. Some commenters supported a more formal house museum or operating military headquarters with roped-off rooms filled with period or original pieces where war-time scenarios could be reenacted. Others did not want the headquarters to be a museum of the “Pemberton slept here variety” but instead thought it should be a more interactive facility where modern technology such as computer generated images would help attract younger people who are not motivated by standard museums.

Some commenters focused on the interpretive potential of the 1863 portion of the site (citing Congressional intent), while others suggested inclusion of all elements of the headquarters, including the 1919 addition. Reconstruction of the former kitchen (behind the headquarters) was suggested, or the new structure could be used for interpretation, as a resource center to provide in-depth information to supplement the orientation given at the current visitor center, as a tearoom, or for visitor facilities such as restrooms. Also proposed was construction of a new wing to house facilities and the latest interpretive technology (the Atlanta Cyclorama was cited as an example).

Suggestions were made to acquire the entire block, purchase the nearby Balfour House and restore it so tours could be offered as a companion interpretive measure, or to acquire the 1960s building behind the Balfour House and restore the gardens back to South Street. Others suggested linking interpretation of Pemberton’s Headquarters with the Cobb House where the Sisters of Mercy began their mission.

Several individual comments related to specific interpretive ideas, such as having reenactments at the Pemberton’s Headquarters, having a debate team reenact Pemberton’s debate/discussion, and interpretation of the cannon ball said to have come through the ceiling of the house during the battle. Several commenters noted that some of the original furnishings scattered throughout Vicksburg at other locations should be located and used to restore and interpret the headquarters. The issue of whether the National Park Service would charge the public for admittance to the building and/or for tours was also raised.

### Opportunities for Partnering With Others

The following suggestions presented ways the Pemberton’s Headquarters could partner with others, help relate the headquarters to other properties such as the downtown overlooks and Grant’s Canal, and/or help the community attract visitors to the downtown area.

Use community resources such as information that could be provided by Gordon Cotton, the historian at the Old Courthouse.

Acquire and restore the Balfour House and its gardens (or the whole block) and conduct companion tours;

Open the Pemberton's Headquarters for community uses such as parties;

Work with the Sisters of Mercy and Southern Cultural Heritage Center to develop an interpretive history program;

Include the community's ethnic groups in interpretation of the area's history; and

Work with the City of Vicksburg to present the area history.

#### Maintenance Needs/Requirements

Problems with the structure include a deteriorating roof, poor rainwater dispersal, termites, rot, bricks that require repointing, past inappropriate use of Portland cement, and a failing retaining wall. Changes to the utilities are needed to prevent future problems. In the recent past, the interior of the house was modernized with changes to the floor plans and adding new finishes and pseudo-historical elements. These changes mask the building's historic appearance.

The following maintenance suggestions were made:

Repair all of the property, bringing everything (wiring, restrooms, handicap access, plumbing, etc.) up to code;

Focus on preserving historic fabric and integrity;

Stabilize and repair the building as soon as possible;

Consider having an employee or others use the house so that small problems could be caught early; and

Conduct repairs and analysis (paint analysis, wallpaper, removal of modern partitions, etc.) would help confirm the structure's history.

#### Access

Comments dealing with access include the following:

For public access, the National Park Service should consider access/egress and the flow of movement through the interior;

Need to minimize harm to this National Historic Landmark building, especially while working to meet life and safety codes;

A ramp or wheelchair lift would be visually intrusive into the cultural landscape;

An elevator would remove historic fabric and be a visual and physical intrusion into the house. Need to seek alternative ways to achieve compliance with ADA so that the integrity of the historic structure is not needlessly compromised;

Concern was expressed over total restoration because visitors, particularly older people, “need their amenities”; and

No matter what is done, it needs to be accessible to all ages.

#### Other Concerns

Other comments included questions about “What’s next in this process” and questions about the possible cost of the project.

#### FINAL TREATMENT AND USE CONCEPTS

The following is a summary of the final concepts that were developed based on the input obtained from the public, as well as from all other available information. Following a thorough review of the public comments, it was determined that the concepts as presented in the newsletter captured the public concerns regarding the possible approaches for future use and treatment of the facility. Therefore, the concepts described below are the same as those described in the November 2005 newsletter. A preferred concept may be selected by the National Park Service in the future, pending available funding.

##### Concept 1

Under Concept 1, all post 1863 additions would be removed, and both the interior and the exterior of the 1835-1836 / 1850-1851 structure would be restored to their 1863 appearance and period of significance. As part of the project, a one-story frame porch would be reconstructed at the rear of the ell.

Implementation of Concept 1 would help to preserve the most important character defining elements of the structure and its immediate surrounds. Currently, intrusive modern spaces, features, and materials obscure many of the building’s historic details. Removal of the overlying modern additions could reveal these historic details which could, in turn, provide a visual window into the lifestyle of its residents. The physical details -- such as the materials and colors used both inside and outside the building, the spatial arrangements, the high ceilings, large windows, and elegant woodwork -- all echo the cultural traditions of the South in 1863. The historic elements speak to the ways people used space, to the activities they considered appropriate for different parts of the house, to the ways they entertained, the physical resources used in construction and maintenance, and to what was considered important in their lives. Even more important, these historic details could help illuminate and enhance our understanding of the role Pemberton’s Headquarters played in the Civil War.

The 1919 addition may have achieved historic importance in its own right. Removal of this structural element, as well as the small 1913 addition, would need to be preceded by additional research and evaluation to determine their significance and integrity, and to implement any additional compliance measures that might be required.

While some visitors may have the ability to identify, visually eliminate, and ignore intrusive modern elements of the structure as it is at present, others may assume that the modern elements are in fact historic, leaving them with an incomplete understanding of

the period and the vital story the house has to tell. Removal of these intrusive modern features, and restoration of the historic building elements and fabric, would provide visitors with the crucial setting vital to a meaningful interpretive program. Concept 1 also would greatly facilitate the interpreters' task by providing a much more accurate backdrop for their programs.

Each year, historic structures all through the South succumb to the vicissitudes of wind, weather, and remodeling. Restoration of the structure would help prolong its life while retaining a special part of the Nation's history. Restoration would reduce the need for future stop-gap maintenance activities while reducing both interior and exterior maintenance costs.

There would be another advantage to restoration. Removal of intrusive modern elements would likely reveal previously unknown or undocumented structural features, uses, or past remodeling episodes. The architecture of the house has a story to tell, and it is probable that some of these intriguing stories lie hidden beneath the modern additions.

There would be disadvantages as well. The reconstructed rear porch, if enclosed, could provide some space for staff offices, storage space, and a staff restroom. However, at present, detailed information is unavailable to determine whether the rear porch was actually enclosed in 1863, and to define its design and materials. Even if the porch could be rebuilt, it appears to have been fairly narrow, and so would not provide much usable space for park facilities.

Unless a separate facility could be provide nearby, part of the 1863 house interior would have to be set aside for park offices, staff and public restrooms, storage space, and other support activities. Restrooms and janitorial rooms, with their potential for water leaks would be especially threatening to the fabric of this historic building. Installation of telephone lines and computer hookups also could result in damage to historic fabric.

Under this concept, access for the handicapped would be limited at best, and would have the potential to be both physically and visually intrusive. If a wheelchair ramp were constructed, it would be a massive intrusion to the site because of the five to seven foot change in elevation from grade to the first level of the structure.

A wheelchair lift at the front of the house would be impractical because of limitations on access to that part of the site. A lift at the rear of the building could provide access up six or seven feet to a first-level doorway. An elevator would be necessary for providing access to both levels of the house. An outside elevator at any elevation would be a significant visual intrusion, although less so at the crux of the ell. An elevator inside the house footprint would cause major disruption to the physical fabric of the structure and would be financially excessive.

Some of the post 1863 parts of the house reflect additions made by the Sisters of Mercy and others. Restoration activities would remove tangible evidence of this period in the life of the structure. Though the occupancy of the Sisters of Mercy and others could be interpreted through drawings, photographs, models, narratives and building artifacts, the major tangible evidence of their presence, the 1919 addition, would be lost.

## Concept 2

Under Concept 2 all post-1863 additions would be removed, and the exterior of the 1835-36/1850-51 building would be restored to its Civil War appearance. The interior would be rehabilitated. As in Concept 1, one of the major advantages would be preservation of the historic fabric and character-defining features of the exterior of this landmark structure. On the other hand, the interior of the structure would not be restored, and the historic elements would remain hidden and possibly somewhat more vulnerable to deterioration. As described for Concept 1, further research and evaluation would be needed prior to removal of the post-1863 additions.

The park's interpretive themes would be only partially addressed because rehabilitation of the interior would not restore the historic spatial arrangements, materials, or elements. Interpretive programs set in the interior of the house would continue to present visitors with a confused image of the evolution of the building and its inhabitants. Some of the interior space might need to be used for National Park Service administration, storage, etc. which could tend to limit some of the interpretive potential for the building.

Maintenance costs would be reduced, but not as much as in Concept 1. That is, rehabilitation of the interior might not be able to uncover and correct some of the on-going problems that may be contributing to structural deterioration. A wealth of cultural information about the evolution and uses of a structure can be gained during restoration activities. Under Concept 2 interior rehabilitation would remove few modern interior features, thus providing a smaller number of opportunities to examine hidden structural elements.

As described for Concept 1, part of the 1863 house interior would have to be set aside for park facilities, with an associated potential for water leaks and diminished space for public programs/interpretation. Access for the handicapped would be limited and both physically and visually intrusive. Tangible evidence of the historic additions made by Sisters of Mercy and others would be lost.

## Concept 3

Under Concept 3, all extant exteriors and interiors would be preserved as found at present. This would, of course, retain all periods of the structural evolution of the building, and preserve structural elements associated with the Sisters of Mercy, allowing enhanced interpretation of the structure's long and varied history. Retention of the 1919 and 1913 elements of the building would provide facilities such as restrooms for staff and visitors. National Park Service staff and volunteers would have space to prepare interpretive materials and programs which would reduce the number of trips back to the main part of the park.

However, there would be little opportunity to examine the hidden cultural information buried beneath modern overlays. The initial costs would be less than those for total restoration, but some maintenance costs could continue because of the difficulty in correcting hidden structural problems.

The park's interpretive themes would be only marginally addressed because the existing complex and confusing combination of historic features and events would continue to serve as the setting for interpretive programs. The plumbing in the original house could potentially damage the structure if leaks occur. Depending upon the type of access provided, access for those with mobility restrictions could be limited and physically and visually intrusive.

#### Concept 4

Both the interior and exterior of the 1863 portion of Pemberton's Headquarters would be restored, and the 1919 addition (which may have gained historic significance in its own right) would be retained and rehabilitated. The 1913 addition would be removed. As described for Concept 1, these actions would preserve the character-defining elements of the building. Although further research and evaluation would be necessary prior to removal of the 1913 addition, this small restroom does not presently appear to be one of the structure's primary character-defining elements. Thus its removal likely would not diminish the overall integrity of the headquarters.

This concept would provide increased space within the historic part of the building for interpretative programs. Restoration would allow accurate interpretation of the 1863 building while helping to protect the integrity of materials and structural elements. Retention of the 1919 addition would provide additional space for badly needed park management and support activities. There would be fewer constraints on the types of programs and use occurring in the building, and would maximize the potential for interpretation.

Restrooms could be provided for staff and visitors without endangering the fabric of the 1863 structure. Restoration actions would likely uncover presently unknown architectural details that could contribute measurably to understanding the history of the building and the activities that occurred here. Future maintenance costs would be reduced.

Retention of the 1919 addition would block the view of the south elevation of the original ell, and the original exterior of this part of the building would not be fully restored. The view of the 1919 addition would, however, be visible primarily from the rear of the structure, not from the front elevation. Placement of handicap access in this area would also be intrusive, but again, the added elements could be tucked unobtrusively into the rear of the building, and should not have an adverse effect on the historic fabric of the 1863 structure.

## LITERATURE CITED

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

APPENDIX B  
COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC